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ABSTRACT

A descriptive account of influences on careers of black youth in the metro-east area, based on a relatively upwardly mobile group, shows the influence of family over teachers, counselors, and other nonrelatives on youth in their educational and occupational careers, and the educational and occupational deprivation of local black families in the past. These influences result in the frequent inability of black youth to take advantage of opportunities that may be opening up for blacks in metro-east, through lack of example from "significant others," faulty, or scanty information, or in some instances unrealistic goals. Another finding is the generally high aspirational level among black youth. Given a lack of opportunity or an inability to take advantage of opportunity, this condition can lead to a highly frustrating and potentially explosive situation. Attempts by the community to improve the situation are described, resulting in programs and cultural enterprises by groups and individuals that involve the informal, primary-type relationships that prevail in black social life. It is recommended that counselors in the educational system become aware of black family structure and employ it as a model for counseling among black youth. (Author)

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CAREERS OF BLACK YOUTH IN THE METRO-EAST AREA

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CAREERS OF BLACK YOUTH IN THE METRO-EAST AREA*

Joyce Aschenbrenner

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Background of Study

Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville is located in the "Metro-east" area, so called because it lies east of St. Louis and is part of the metropolitan complex surrounding the Mississippi River at the site of the old river port. It serves many communities in the area with a varied ethnic makeup, including East European, Mexican-American, Armenian and Black American. Two communities are the focus of this study and, in particular, the Black micro-communities within them; the white community components are mentioned only as they affect their Black neighbors. While the two macro-communities mentioned differ in many ways, they are a part of the same metropolitan complex, supported by the same industries, and, especially in the case of the Black communities, manifest a high degree of interaction and communication between them. East St. Louis is predominantly Black (approximately 75%); Edwardsville has relatively few Black citizens (the High School student population is 4.4% Black). While the Black residents of Edwardsville represent older, more settled families in the area and tend to regard the East St. Louisans as "newcomers," still, they look to East St. Louis as a testing ground and a vanguard of new movements among Black Americans.

The objective of this study is a descriptive account of careers and education among Black families in the two communities, with the aim of judging the relative importance of different influences on the decisions about careers and on educational goals and achievements of young men and women. Specifically, the focus is on the role of family members in influencing decisions about careers and education, with attention also directed to the relative weight given to advice and example offered by peers and school authorities in the choice of careers. It is hoped that the results of the study can be utilized in developing and assessing special programs relating to Black youth in the area.

It should be stated at the outset that there was some resistance and expression of doubts concerning the value of the study by Black citizens in the area; as some remarked, there have been 'studies of studies' of Blacks, none of which have done them any good. These feelings are understandable, although the views are not necessarily valid. Some of those interviewed stated that they had learned much from the interview itself; further, recent political events have strongly vindicated the proposition that knowledge is power. Following this dictum, the dissemination of the information in this report to key figures in the community and some of it to the populace generally should benefit the community in ways which possibly cannot be predicted, at least in detail. As a Black sociologist states: "Contrary to assumptions made by Black metropolitan individuals and groups in recent years, no moratorium on research about blacks is needed nor was it ever needed. Moratoria on bad research about blacks are still needed. The distinction is crucial."[1]

The present study was based on the results of earlier research by the author,[2] as well as by others,[3] in which the close contact and mutual aid among Black family members and the relatives strength of family bonds, even across long distances, are established. Although, given the generally low economic status of Blacks in the area, it does not necessarily follow that Black youth are strongly influenced by family in their decisions about school and jobs, preliminary observation had led me to believe that they, in fact, were.

Research Methods and Description of Sample

The research involved extensive and intensive interviewing techniques in an attempt to obtain a balance between quantitative and qualitative data. Observation and social participation were also important aspects of the research. The extensive interviewing was conducted primarily by

six students (2 female, 4 male; two female and one male interviewer dropped out during the investigation.) In all, there were 161 of these interviews, 81 of them given by male interviewers, 80 given by female. The interviews were fairly detailed and informal, including information about educational and career choices; kinship information, including education and occupation of relatives; and opinions and knowledge concerning career opportunities in the area. The intensive interviews by the principal investigator included more detailed kinship information, career histories, history of Blacks in the area, as well as opinions about what should be done by and for Blacks in the future. These were conducted over a ten month period. Ten individuals were selected for the more intensive interviews, consisting mainly of community leaders: educators and other professionals as well as those active in various organizations. In addition, much time was spent in abserving and participating in the functioning of a local NAACP chapter.

No systematic attempt was made to choose a random or representative sample; the choice of individuals interviewed in both aspects of the research were a reflection of the social networks of the interviewers; the student assistants were Black students at SIUE. As a rule, close friends were not interviewed, but acquaintances, work and school contacts and neighbors. Since most of the interviewers were from E. St. Louis, the majority of those interviewed were from that city (as are the majority of Black students at SIUE). Since the study was aimed towards gaining information useful for educators at SIUE, as well as other community leaders, it was felt that such a sample of the population, reflecting the social environment of SIUE students, would be of most value to the study.

Table I shows the breakdown according to age of those interviewed by

TABLE I

Age of Interviewed

20 and under	52
21-30 yrs.	67
31-50 yrs.	21
51 and over	21
Total	161
Median Age	25.3

TABLE II

Sex of Interviewed by Sex of Interviewers

	M	F
Total Interviewed	79	82
By Females	37	43
By Males	41	40
Totals	78	83

TABLE III

Age By Sex*

	M	F
20 and under	16	36
21-30	38	29
31-50	13	8
over 50	12	9
Median ages	27.1	22.7

*Sign. at .01

students. While the sample is biased towards youth, reflecting, in particular, the age group of most of the interviewers (21-30 years), this bias is not objectionable in view of the emphasis of the study on the careers of Black youth. The older and younger age categories are included to lend some comparison to the study. Tables II and III show the breakdown by sex and age. An attempt was made to attain balance in the sex distribution; Table II shows little difference between the total number of males and females interviewed and between the number of males and females, respectively, interviewed by male and female assistants. However, a bias towards youth for females relative to males interviewed is shown in Table III, the largest group of males falling into the 21-30 years category and a disproportionate number of females in the age 20 and under category. Two interviewers, one male and one female, account for the larger number of females in the 20 and under age category.

Thirty-nine percent (39%) of those interviewed were married and living with spouses; fifty-three percent (53%) were single and eight percent (8%) were separated from spouses through divorce, separation or death. Nearly one-half of the respondents had children, although two-thirds of these had only two children or fewer; fewer of the women than the men were married (59% M; 47% F) and fewer had children (53% M; 43% F). These differences are to be expected in view of the lower female age median (22.7).

The sample was also biased in the direction of higher education; again, this is not surprising in view of the fact that the interviewers were college students and in many instances were interviewing their peers. Some attempt was made to obtain some representation of the community, however. Table IV indicates the educational distribution by age. In view of these statistics, we can characterize the sample as a relatively upwardly mobile group within the total population.

TABLE IV

Education by Age*
(20 and under category omitted)

Age	Grade School	High School	College	Total
21-30	2	13	53	68
31-50	3	5	14	22
over 50	14	2	5	21
Totals	19	20	72	111

TABLE V

Actual and Preferred Occupations**

	Respondent	Relatives	Preferred: for Self	Preferred: for Blacks	Blacks in E.St. Louis***
Professional	8.1	12.5	50	42	7.4
Technical	4.1	4.6	15	17	1.4
Skilled	12.1	9.3	13	12	43.7
Business	1.9	3.4	10	10	3.4
Clerical & Sales	13.3	7.5	0	8	1.9
Manual Labor & Service	12.1	20.9	0	0	33.1

TABLE VI

Occupation by Education*
(Relatives)

	Unemployed	Manual Labor & Skilled	Clerical & Sales	Professional & Technical	Business	Total
Grade School	24	107	6	0	6	143
High School	31	172	64	31	14	312
College	4	34	22	124	7	191
Totals	59	313	92	155	27	646

* Significant at less than .001
** in percentages
*** 1970 census

Most of those interviewed were long-term residents: 93% had lived here at least ten years and 62% had lived in the area their entire lives. Thus, although perhaps socially mobile, as a group they are not geographically mobile.

Occupations of and for Blacks in the Area

According to a study by the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Employment Problems of Black Youth[4] (1969), despite some gains in employment and education, young Blacks suffer higher rates of unemployment than White youth (1.8 times as high for youths 16-24 years of age); further, they operate on a secondary tracking system throughout their period of employment, with lower pay, lower status jobs, and slower advancement. Further, most young Blacks are overeducated for the jobs they do hold.

Table V shows the types of jobs (in percentage) held by those interviewees who are working, compared with (1) the job breakdown for the City of East St. Louis in the 1970 census, (2) the occupations of the relatives of the respondents, (3) the expressed preferences for jobs by respondents and (4) jobs mentioned as best for Blacks in the area. Two different conclusions can be drawn from a comparison of these data, namely: (1) the aspirations and hopes of those interviewed far exceed the possibility of achievement; (2) these aspirations reflect a potentially highly mobile group. As measured by occupations of relatives and the total East St. Louis occupational analysis, only a fraction of those who desire professional jobs will achieve them in this area. While the relatively high rate of professionals among relatives and among those interviewed reflect a high social and economic standing, their aspirations are still disproportionately high; this discrepancy may be partly accounted for by recent political developments in the area (see below) as well as the high educational level. It should be recalled, furthermore, that given the high educational

level for the sample population, under ordinary circumstances such aspirations would not necessarily be unrealistic. Perhaps the final conclusion to be drawn is that more professional opportunities will necessarily open up for Blacks in the metro-east area.

In view of the probable lack of attainment of desired jobs in the area for many Blacks, one might conclude that many of those who wish advancement plant to leave the area. While over one-half (53%) were optimistic about job opportunities in the area, thirty-six percent (36%) expressed pessimism and eleven percent (11%) were indifferent; half of those interviewed planned to stay in the area (50%); thirty-eight percent (38%) planned to leave and twelve percent (12%) were undecided. In view of the present lack of opportunities, this large potential mobility seems logical, although given the closeness and importance of family ties, it is probable that in some instances it reflects a temporary dissatisfaction or disillusionment: as noted above, in the past this group has been relatively stable in terms of residence.

The emphasis on education as a solution to career problems is reflected in statements about future plans. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the total sample planned to attend, continue or return to college; in the lowest age group (under 20) 79% included a college education in their future plans; in the 21-30 age group, 67% included college in future plans.

Despite the relative lack of high status, well-paying jobs for Blacks, the emphasis on education reflects a fairly realistic assessment of life chances: thus, the rate of unemployment is highest among those with only Grade School and/or High School education (See Table VI); manual labor and skilled work predominates among those with High School education, and Professional and Technical careers

are highest among those with college. The dearth of business opportunities is reflected in the equally low rate of those in business in each educational category. While the unemployment rate is low among the college educated, thirty-five percent (35%) of those with college are employed in other than professional or technical capacities, reflecting the lack of professional opportunities for Blacks in this area.

Male and Female Occupational Opportunities

In the Twentieth Century Task Force study, the plight of Black girls and women was described as worse than that for boys and young men. There are fewer jobs available to them, and often family responsibilities and early children put them in a dependency status.

In the 1970 census, the unemployment rate for females in the work force is higher than for males (10.6F; 10.1M). Among those interviewed, 8.2% of the males were reported as unemployed, 9.1% of females. Females were in clerical and sales in relatively high numbers, males in manual labor, skilled work, and the professions. However, females were equally concerned about education and included college in their future plans as frequently; further, an almost equal percentage had some college (59%M; 56%F), while less than half as many females were college graduates (12%M; 5%F). However, more men than women reported having dropped out of college (30.4%M; 13.3%F) and the drop-out rate for High School is also higher for males (Significant at the .01 level). All of this confirms the Task Force conclusion that girls enjoy and stay in school partly because of fewer job opportunities and because their family situation may be unsatisfactory. Their tendency to stay in school, however, does not necessarily result in better career opportunities.

Some Individual Experiences and Opinions About Opportunities

RM, who is in the age group 21-30, describes his work experience as follows: "I worked in the data processing department at Edison Brothers in St. Louis. After working there for about a year I quit. There seemed to be a different pay scale for different people. I started off there at a pay of $70 per week; after six months of work, I was informed that if I worked on the night shift I would receive a $5 raise. While I was working on the night shift, (my boss) hired a white girl who was working under me but received a starting pay of $80 per week. Then I discovered that the $5 raise was due to me after I worked there for six months. I couldn't take any more so I told (my boss) what I thought, and then quit. I have been looking for a job for about one year with no luck; that's why I joined the Air Force." RM plans to take advantage of the G.I. Bill and enter college after his term in the Air Force.

LK, also a male in the 21-30 age group has been a little more fortunate in job experiences. He is a junior in college, is on leave of absence from the firm where he is an accounting clerk. He plans to seek a MA in Business Administration, saying "The job I had didn't have any future is why I came to college." He "stumbled" on the job he was on; he was looking for any kind of job he could get and was accepted for the accounting position; while working he saw that without further education he couldn't advance, so he decided to go back to school and major in accounting.

Another young man in the same age group is an auto parts clerk; he lacks one-half credit for a High School diploma and his mother wants him to go back and finish, then go on to college. He was an auto mechanic but left because he didn't get along with the owner; he would like to own his own filling station. If he doesn't get "breaks" on the job, he thinks he may go back to school.

LD, currently unemployed, has no plans for further education. His mother wants him to go to night school, but he doesn't want to. He would like to do construction work, but believes there are few opportunities for this work in the area; white workers get most of the jobs. He plans to leave the area as soon as possible.

Another young man who is a Counselor for the Department of Labor is not interested in continuing his education. He dropped out of college at the end of his Freshman year and feels he does not need college. His present job requires a degree which he does not have; he feels that practical experience is more important, although he has taken courses for no credit.

As had been indicated above, the latter view of education is a minority position in this study; as one young man put it, "the more education you have, the more chances you have of getting away from that 'muscle' type of labor." For girls, the imperative of education is even greater; one woman in the 21-30 age group states that at the age of 13 she was left alone nights while her mother worked, and neighbors suggested that she would become pregnant and not finish school. This gave her the determination to continue, and she graduated with a perfect attendance record. She went on to complete two years at business school and has taken courses at the IBM Institute, where she plans to pursue a two-year certificate in data processing. She is presently a librarian at the Mobility Equipment Command under the U.S. Army, working with Army regulations. A high school girl stated: "Blacks should go to college before trying to find their job because a high school diploma just doesn't get a job. The high school kids I've talked to want desk-type jobs, and they're not going to get them with just 12th grade. It's hard enough for Blacks to get jobs; without college, they might as well expect to sweep trash off the streets or something."

That opportunities are perceived as opening up for girls as well as women is seen from the comments of a young woman who was planning to become a nurse. Both of her parents had gone to college and her grandmother had discouraged her from becoming a teacher and encouraged her to become a nurse, since she feels there is a surplus of teachers in East St. Louis. The young woman believes that social work, child care and nursing are good jobs for Black women in the area. The young woman mentioned earlier who plans a career in data processing states that occupations are "wide open." An older woman, a zoology technician, believes that secretarial, social work and teaching positions as well as medical positions are open to young women in the area. Another woman, over 50, who has done only menial work (maid, cannery, cutting weeds) is optimistic about Blacks becoming doctors, teachers and entering the social fields, but stresses the desirability of "an education right now to do anything."

Many of those interviewed freely commented upon the position of Blacks in general in the area and where the future emphasis should lie. "If more Blacks get into social work, dealing with their own problems, they will become more optimistic about advancement, especially in this area...more Black social workers will eliminate the chaos in the distribution of federal funds; the present problem in the distribution of federal monies is created by whites dictating what it should be." (Labor Counselor) "Municipal administration, some aspect of legislature or community service is desirable for Blacks, to the end of elevation of the oppressed in this land...they should turn to urban planning, structural design, management, any type of leadership position that will open the door for Black people" (Student at SIUE) The Zoology technician was optimistic about opportunities for advancement in East St. Louis because the city is predominantly Black: "If I'm a Black in a profession, then it would be my responsibility to

meet the needs of Black Brothers in this area, rather than having professional "outsiders" come into the area." Another felt that Blacks should hold most positions in the community since it is predominantly Black, but that whites have jobs that should be held by Blacks. A twenty-four year-old woman who is in the twelfth grade feels that young people today "need to relate to Blacks in these positions (doctors, lawyers, teachers) whereas yesterday there were none."

A youth program coordinator felt that "meaningful, productive positions with opportunities for economic power like social advisers, federal program coordinators or the political fields" are possible and desirable for Blacks in the area; he felt that East St. Louis is a "gold mine," being supplied by federal funds that are being put to effective uses. A doctor's receptionist remarked on the "strong, youthful spirit that's moving through East St. Louis" and a writer and Consultant for Urban Affairs spoke of "independent politicians and their new tactics and direction," probably referring obliquely to the recently-elected Black mayor of East St. Louis and its Commissioners. An older woman, over 50, who works with tax forms, directly referred to the Mayor, remarking that he is concerned and sincere in his efforts to help East St. Louis, and a real estate inspector remarked "Election of our Black Mayor catalyzes opportunities for advancement." A young woman in physical therapy states, "Solidarity, unity and a definite direction are the essence...I would recommend this city to anyone looking to get themselves together." According to an optimistic job developer: "There are a lot of things needed in East St. Louis; young ideas need developing," and a Dean of Students at the Community College commented to his young interviewer, "Your generation or younger are seeking wider ranges and won't allow stereotypes that held me back to hold them back."

Others were not so enthusiastic, especially those with little chance of advancement. A man over 50 who stated he "has made it" without an education is critical: 'This city is set up on a political base which a stumbling block for advancement.' And a young man who plans to obtain a PhD in Music was even more critical: 'If Blacks try to get ahead around here, the other Blacks will try to bring him down. If they don't do this, then they will get what they can and the hell with antbody else...look at downtown (city government); if they ain't arguing amongst one another, they are raising each others' pay, when East St. Louis' already gone." Some complained about the lack of industry and criticized agencies which give "pay without positions" and token jobs at City Hall" to "get them out of the way,' which do nothing for Blacks on a long-term basis. Others expressed general dissatisfaction with the social and political climate and lack of optimism: "It's easy to say things are going to be better, but it's different from really <u>being</u> better. We have only just begun..."

To summarize the data on views of opportunities, it appears that young people who are in college and those who are working in federal-funded programs or in the professional and technical fields tend to be optimistic about community development and the direction of policy and economic growth; most older people, those who have "dropped out" and those who are working in industry are less sanguine unless they have benefitted directly from governmental programs. How the increasing Federal cut-backs for economic and social programs will affect this remains to be seen. In view of the high aspirations and optimism of many Black youth, the potential for an embittering, even perhaps explosive situation appears inherent in the current set of circumstances.

Characteristics of Desirable Jobs

Stated criteria of satisfactory careers ranged from self-interest and self realization to community service. According to a recreation director, a desirable job is 'anything that satisfies the basic life surviving need with enough insurance to obtain leisure pleasures"; he felt that most good occupations in the area were illegal ones, except for teaching and mechanics. A young recreational assistant replied to the question about desirable job characteristics in terms of "interest, relevancy to my Black brothers, and freedom of exploration." A pre-law student chose her career because: 'I want to help my brothers and sisters in the ghetto who might buy something and be tricked into paying a lot of extra money for it or who might pay a lot for insurance and then when something happened not get any money back...they should be able to have a lawyer help them know whether or not what they're signing is in their good interests." According to a work-study student at State Community College in East St. Louis: 'Producing and building, a grocery store, anything where one can be self employed...(managing) something like a manufacturing firm where everybody owns it and contributes to it would be good. Everybody would profit. When the company gets rich the community also gets rich." A young woman approved of "(rehabilitative occupations) that help the people get themselves together, improve themselves (law, education, construction, business skills)" An older man ventured the opinion that Blacks needed to be teachers and social workers "with dedication and outreach in communities, since since industry has moved from the area." And a junior at SIUE who works full-time as a laborer while attending school prefers 'Any career that grants me independence from White exploitation, or any exploitation...and would grant an inward feeling of security and, to a degree, self-pride and dignity.

The less optimistic said that any jobs that could be found were desirable at the present time "Right now if you can find any kind of job around here I would consider it a good job." An older man specified "well-paying with room for advancement; we always tend to end up with jobs to stabilize us." Others felt that anything Blacks were qualified for were good jobs; one young lady, 17, stressed that Blacks should not take jobs they were not qualified for, just to fill a quota; then it was too easy to stereotype Blacks as inefficient. However, she did feel that there should be more Black doctors and lawyers, that too many Blacks feel they cannot attain these positions. Several criticized "token positions" in business and industry, but one felt that Black businessmen needed more expertise in the various fields of business. However, a young High School student who plans to take up nursing stated firmly "The qualified Black person stands less of a chance of getting a good, well-paying job than the unqualified white person" and that economic development for Blacks all over the country "is a hard, up-hill climb that takes a lot of determination."

On the whole, the career aspirations of youth and the judgment of respondents concerning desirable careers included a balance of realistic and idealistic elements, and many of them strongly reflected pride in Blackness; a young woman Business Administration major expressed it most directly: "Blacks should instill in themselves the personal pride to get and stay on top. Women are trying to do more for themselves; when they do they want men with the same level of pride and endeavor..to want the best!"

Sources of Knowledge About Careers

The source of knowledge about career opportunities apparently has a bearing on whether respondents were influenced in their own career decisions.

Several categories of sources of knowledge about careers and influences on the choice of careers emerged from the data. In the case of respondents' personal choice, family(including members beyond the nuclear group) were mentioned most often (See Table VIIA). Teachers and friends were mentioned next, respectively (although the group of responses lumped together as "self" intervened here); then "chance" was the next highest factor. To explain these categories: "family" included grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts, siblings, in-laws and children. Knowledge and influence could be through example (ex: a grandfather who had a PhD in music, parents who were teachers); through advice, financial help and understanding; by stated aspirations ("My baby is going to be a nurse" by a grandmother); and through competition, especially with older siblings. Influential teachers (including counselors and coaches) were described as close friends, as like parents or older brothers and sisters, and as greatly involved in their jobs (ex: a health teacher took her class to visit a hospital every week). Friends were described as close; play-relatives and sorority and fraternity sisters and brothers were among those mentioned, either in the chosen positions themselves or encouraging or advising respondents to enter certain positions. "Chance" includes knowledge gained through army experience and through jobs that were taken because they were available; in some cases these led to further education or training and advancement. The category "self" probably include those who were influenced by family members or teachers or other sources of information but who are not aware of this; however, such answers probably reflect a high degree of self-motivation.

In the case of knowledge about positions desirable for Blacks other than oneself, social acquaintances rated highest, and family, friends and general information, the latter through the media and community involvement, were

TABLE VIIA

Influences and Sources of Knowledge on Careers*

	Family	Friends	Business and Prof. contacts	Teachers	Acquaint-ances	General Info.	"Chance"	"Self"	Total
Personal Choice	65	23	3	24	1	7	22	26	125
Ideas for other Blacks in area	16	26	21	0	37	27	-	-	110
Totals	81	49	24	24	38	34	22	26	235

TABLE VIIB

Influence on Education

	Family	Friends	Teachers	No one	Total
Males	40	6	17	15	78
Females	48	7	10	18	83
Totals	88	13	27	33	161

*These categories are not mutually exclusive, since some respondents indicated more than one source; therefore, the figures represent a relative weighting, rather than a categorical influence of the factors.

also mentioned frequently. Jobs mentioned as desirable for Blacks in the area ranged from professionals--teachers, social workers, morticians, nurses, doctors, lawyers, politicians, business managers--and technicians--pharmacists, medical technicians--to small business owners and lower level occupations such as secretaries, construction workers, and mechanics. Notably absent were references to domestic work and unskilled labor; further, many mentioned services that were needed by Blacks and supervisory and managerial positions which were often denied them.

As seen in Table V, the relatives of those interviewed tended to be relatively numerous in professional categories (12.5% as compared to 7.4% for East St. Louis); also, 20% of relatives had at least some college. This might account for the extensive knowledge about occupations evident in the interviews, and one might assume that a sample more representative of the total population would be less knowledgeable. It should be cautioned, however, that in many instances respondents did not know the occupations of some of their relatives; this would probably result in bias towards the professional category in the case of relatives, since the respondents would probably be most likely to identify those occupations.

In answer to the question, "Who was influential in your education?" 63% said that relatives and friends were influential; only 17% mentioned teachers or counselors and 20% said no one at all. (Table VIIB) The latter figure represents a high ideal of independence and self reliance among those interviewed; the actual influence of relatives and friends is hard to assess and can here only be measured by respondents' statements. When asked who they generally confide in, 81% mentioned relatives and play-relatives; only 13% mentioned non-relatives and 6% said "no one." Looking at men and women separately, there is no significant difference as to which relative they confide in, although males usually

appear to have a tendency to confide more in their wives, females more in siblings, and females tend to be influenced by parents more than by teachers in their educational career, while males tend to be influenced more by teachers. (Note: these tendencies are not quite significant at the .05 level) Differentiating between the influence of mother and father on choice of careers, females are, understandably, more influenced by their mothers, males by their fathers (significant at .01); on the other hand, this difference between males and females does not hold either for influence on education or for personal confidences.

The above findings confirm the view that Black youth are influenced more by relatives that by outside professionals in their life decisions. It should be noted that comparable data for white youth in the area is not available; the emphasis here is on the relative influence of various factors in the experience of a population of Blacks in the metro-east area which I have characterized as relatively upwardly mobile.

These conclusions were borne out in the more detailed interviews. In three large extended families, in particular, certain careers reached almost "epidemic" proportions, namely, college teaching and administration, secondary school teaching and administration, and music performance and teaching. In one family the decision of a School Principal (now 94-year old patriarch) to educate his daughters and give them musical training initiated a career pattern of teaching and music that has persisted throughout three generations. His sisters were also teachers, and when his children were growing up it was easier for girls than boys to become teachers; he educated his daughters to be teachers but trained his sons to trades. However, some of his grandsons are teachers; others as well have attended college, reflecting the increase in opportunities for educated Black men. Further, among the grandchildren and

great-grandchildren there is a branching of careers (economics, nursing, journalism), indicating that much of the earlier job uniformity was a result of limited opportunities. Nevertheless, given the high degree of frustration and counter-influences that must have been experienced by young Blacks in choosing a career in education, the extent to which family influences prevailed seems remarkable. Further, within nuclear units and close groups of relatives in many families, career similarities are marked: thus, daughters of nurses become nurses, pharmacists and laboratory technicians; two sisters become dieticians, two sisters become MD's and so on. Apparently, the support, encouragement and sharing of information among family members is critical.

The careers of two sisters from Edwardsville are outstanding but in many ways not unusual. Their mother died when they were young (9-11 yrs.); one of the girls was adopted formally by her mother's sister, a music teacher in St. Louis; the other went to live with another aunt (mother's sister) in St. Louis, a beautician, whose husband was a coach and teacher at Sumner: an all-Black High School with a high academic rating and many illustrious alumni. Their mother had been a music teacher, and both girls were trained in music; two other aunts (mother's sisters) were teachers and were also musical as were some of the girls' cousins. Two of their mother's brothers were also teachers, and one was the Principal of Sumner at one time. Both aunts who were not teachers were beauticians and both had married teachers who were not, however, particularly musical.

With this family background in mind we can trace the careers of the two girls and perhaps conjecture about some of the influences playing upon them. The sister who was adopted by the music teacher continued in music and is now a violinist with the St. Louis symphony. The other sister, CS, dropped her musical career, gave up the idea of teaching, and opted for a career in Mass Communitcations as radio and TV announcer. CS' sister attended Sumner for

awhile, where she was influenced by the band instructor, noted throughout the country for his composing and arranging; however, she graduated from a Catholic parochial school. CS attended Sumner throughout her High School years; she gave up the idea of teaching while assisting in an Upward Bound program during the summer, but became interested in Speech through a High School teacher under whom she worked in the program. She praised the advisement and information about scholarships and college requirements she had received as one of the top graduating seniors, although she pointed out that others who had not placed so high in tests did not receive such information and applauded the present abandonment of the "track system" in education.

CS' decision to attend Southern Illinois University at Carbondale represents a family tradition; most of her aunts and uncles as well as her mother had graduated from SIUC, where their father had worked as a gardener. He determined that they should attend college and their mother had influenced all her children and later her grandchildren throughout their lives to "save money" and go to school": 'This was always at the back of our minds.' As to the girls' decisions about careers, CS' sister's continuation of her musical career can probably be explained partly by the continuous influence in that direction from those closest to her; in the case of CS, a discontinuity occured when she wentto live with the beautician and the coach at Sumner. Thereafter, her school influences and family influences were mutually reinforcing and away from the pattern of a musical career.

CS and her sister had lost touch with their father's family since the death of their father, which had occurred soon after their mother's death. They were not highly educated people; however, her father, who was musical, his brother and CS' cousin had all married into musical and highly educated families. The influences of affinals on careers is apparent in several

families; when a man or woman marries into a family in which professional careers occur with frequency, in later generations an increase in college education and professional status often occurs among collateral branches. Although this may be partly accounted for merely by increased opportunities, nevertheless influences among members of an extended kin group by example, through competition and increased awareness are strongly indicated by the data previously presented in this section. Further, while there is a "branching out" of careers in contemporary generations, due to greater dissemination of knowledge about careers, the family influence, in terms of educational level and general area of interest is still pronounced, and other types of family influence are sometimes operating (Ex., a young woman takes up "Speech Pathology" because her younger brother has a speech impairment; a girl becomes interested in physical therapy through taking care of her grandmother.) While these kinds of influences have been operating throughout their history, perhaps only recently have Blacks been able to act upon them to the fullest extent.

Extended Families Among Black Americans

The investigator's study of Black families in Chicago revealed localized kin groups of an extended character, with extensive contact, mutual aid and cooperation among kin in a neighborhood or area as well as frequent visiting in other localities. While 49% of those in the present survey lived in nuclear families and 22% in matrifocal households, 11% lived in households with relatives beyond the nuclear family. This latter figure probably does not reflect temporary residence with relatives, relatively frequent in the Chicago study. Further, contact with relatives outside the nuclear family in metro-east was frequent, 85% having contact one or more times a week with relatives, including parents and grandparents, grown siblings, uncles, aunts and cousins

in the local area and 27% contacting those outside metro-east at least once a month, 70% visiting and/or contacting them more than once a year. (Note: "contact" was more often by phone or through visiting than by mail) The occasion of cantact was most frequently specified as "no particular reason" (74%); other reasons wer special occasions such as reunions, birthdays, and economic functions such as babysitting, borrowing and lending.

Respondents mentioned mother's relatives more frequently than father's in the kinship interviews (significant at less than .001). This agrees with other findings among various ethnic groups in which closest ties are with mother's family in the U.S. generally.

Besides "real' kin, Blacks have fictive kin referred to as "play" mother, "play" father, "play" brother and sister, "play" aunt and uncle and so on. These relationships involve concern, closeness, and various kinds of aid. Several respondents mentioned "play" relatives as influential in their careers, and 65% of the sample had "play" relatives. Approximately one-third of these relationships were described as involving economic aid as well as advice and concern; half of them involved "friends of the family"; 34% were personal friendships only and 16% involved neighbors. The proliferation of kinship-type relationships in Black communities underscores the pervasiveness and weight of kinship in the lives of the people.

The families included in the intensive interviews were distinguished by the presence of a patriarch or matriarch who was influential in the lives of younger members; this reflects the respect for family authority that was also observed in Chicago families. In CS' family, her mother's mother was the center of family activities; however, as she grew older and weaker her eldest son and daughter "ran the family." The latter influence nieces and nephews on choices of marriage partners; one niece married her man over their objections

but a young man who didn't "pass Aunt H's test" lost out and his engagement to a niece was broken soon after. Aunt M and Uncle J take care of family business such as that concerning their mother's house; they collect money for her support from her children, sending letters every year: "It's that time of year..." If she needs a new refrigerator, clothes and anything else they make further requests. "There's always someone to lean on" in the family, CS remarks.

CS and her cousins in St. Louis see each other often; one of them, she comments, is rather wild, but he is quiet and respectful around his parents, as are most of his friends. This is especially true in the presence of his mother: "Mother is the center." They will smoke and do most anything with their peers, but they won't do something in front of their mother that hurts her. In this way the integrity of the family is guaranteed even among the young.

The members of this family, as well as of other extended families in the study, are, for the most part, highly successful individuals; this throws into question ideas concerning the purely economic basis of extended families as an explanation of their frequent occurrence among people in lower economic statuses. Here, certainly, the family resources are directed towards social security for the old, the weak, the young; however, most nuclear groups are thriving economic units, best characterized perhaps as "Upper Middle Class," although caution must be observed in applying these terms to Blacks. In a broad sense, such extended kinship groups appear to offer an economic as well as social advantage, providing them with the kind of information about those careers which in many instances cannot be obtained in other ways. Among poor people, the benefits of extended families differ somewhat; however, in all instances they provide a type of security and "belongingness" that cannot be achieved in independent nuclear families.

The Two Communities: History and Current Situation for Blacks

Information about the communities of Edwardsville and East St. Louis was gained from interviews with community leaders. Most of them agreed that many who had obtained college degrees and entered professions in the past had left the area; some were in St. Louis; others were in Minneapolis, Indianapolis, Chicago, New York, Boston, Cincinnati, and other smaller cities. Before SIUE opened in the 60's, local Black students attended SIUC and other schools in Illinois(University of Illinois at Champaigne and DeKalb; Normal Schools in Peoria and elsewhere). At one time Blacks could not attend High School in Edwardsville; the Principal of the all-Black Lincoln School persuaded the School Board to add on two years of High School for Black students, though at first they offered no financial support. Those who wanted to graduate had to go elsewhere: they were bussed to East St. Louis or were paid tuition and room and board to get a diploma in a school where Blacks were accepted: sometimes they even went out-of-state! Often these students would stay on and go to college and get jobs wherever they completed High School; thus they offered no competition to the local white population.

When this policy became too expensive for the city, Lincoln was made into a four-year High School for Blacks. The quality of education was generally high, with a good number of its graduates going on to succeed in college. But businessmen, who paid most of the costs of maintaining a separate Black school, exerted pressure; in 1950 Lincoln School was closed and the Edwardsville school system became integrated. An unfortunate result was the loss of jobs by the Lincoln teachers; the Principal, 70, was due to retire, others were also retired or, not having tenure, merely lost their jobs; those who did have tenure were either afraid to or did not know how to challenge this action.

NAACP, Edwardsville Chapter, put pressure on the Edwardsville school board to hire Black teachers in the new High School. They brought a teacher from St. Louis with years of experience to apply; but although the Superintenden said he was impressed with the man, he wasn't hired. However, a year later they hired a young man from New Orleans who is a coach and who teaches social studies. Later his wife also joined the staff. When interviewed, both pointed out the importance of Black teachers in integrated schools as someone who has "made it.' Otherwise, youth see successful Blacks in crime and prostitution and feel this is the way to get ahead. These teachers are very active in the community and take their positions as "role models" seriously.

The North Central evaluation committee recently conducted a survey of the senior class concerning career selections; the three basic areas chosen by Black students were: social work, law, and teaching. However, many students do not know what these careers entail since they do not have much career guidance; therefore they are not prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that are opening up for Blacks in various areas. Some are merely attracted by the glamour of certain careers: for example, they were surprised to learn that to become a coach one has to take courses like physiology and chemistry and maintain a good G.P.A. Those who succeed should come back to the community, it is felt, and "pay their dues" by helping to educate the young. This is a recent trend; out of five well-known athletes, for example, who had to leave the area to succeed, one recently returned to institute a summer sports program for youth. Perhaps it is not surprising that more of those who succeed do not return in view of the treatment of local Black professionals in the past.

Black High School students in Edwardsville are highly critical of their counselors; in a study of the attitudes of senior Black students towards the counselling and guidance services, a Black teacher discovered that most of them

had seen their counselor only once or twice last year; they felt that their counselor was not concerned with their problems and did not trust him to maintain confidentiality (apparently, they had some grounds for this).[5] They said they would confide in their peers, but in no other adults outside their family about problems with racism, particular teachers and problems at home; with regard to problems with courses and finding out information they would talk to some teachers whom they respect; however their contact with counselors seemed limited to finding out test scores on national merit scholarships and about colleges. They received little or no career counselling, discussion about future plans, and information about scholarships and financial aid. As a result of the study by a Black teachers, some changes have been made in the counselling program; however, it is not yet known how effective these have been. In the case of white students in Edwardsville, most of them being from middle-class backgrounds, poor counselling is not as critical since they receive much information "by osmosis" at home and in the community. However, in many instances, these Black High School students are the first in their family to receive a diploma, due to past educational policies; therefore they are in great need of substantial, concerned counselling.

The findings of the present day study have indicated that Black youth are more influenced by family than by outside influences; this probably holds for white youth as well, although perhaps not so pervasively and not involving as many relatives. However, the lack of opportunities for Blacks in the past has resulted in a situation in which community efforts are needed to improve the learning environment and enhance the knowledge of the career "system" for Black youth.

In Edwardsville, several programs exist, some of them fairly recent, which are directed towards these ends in several respects. Among these are the Youth Council, sponsored by leaders in the community, which aims to provide recreation, counselling, and job opportunities. Although this organization

was originally for Blacks and others as well, most of the white youth dropped out. Another is Ebony Service, a woman's organization which has worked at times with the Youth Council and also in liaison with the NAACP on the Sickle-cell testing program. Ebony Service was the sponser for a fashion show as a benefit for the Sickle-cell program at the SIUE campus; Katherine Dunham's dance troupe from East St. Louis performed, and Black community leaders and members of the Youth Council modeled the clothes which were furnished by local businesses.

Ebony Service is primarily oriented towards social activities and features a "charm" workshop with future plans for sewing classes. According to one of its organizers, a teacher, young people are interested in clothes and appearance, and this is a good place to start: "To each his own." Black children need to develop skills and talents and learn ways to save as do white children, whose mothers do not need to work and have time to teach them. She feels herself fortunate; as a granddaughter of the patiarch mentioned previously she belongs to a family in which the educational level and level of achievement is high. She recalls having to resist influences of her peer group, mostly from disadvantaged backgrounds, in order to play in the school band and get good grades, as well as participate in the Girl Scouts. Most of their parents had not participated in school activities; the Black High School, according to its ex-Principal, did not have money or personnel for a band, although the participation in sports was high, especially in basket-ball and track. For girls, there were very few activities. In order to compen-sate for this lack of background among parents, Ebony Service is considering starting a "joint organization of concerned parents" in which parents could pool their ideas and set up a tutoring and counselling program for their children; in this group some would be educated and they could share their ideas and experiences with other parents.

In view of the special types of relationships mentioned by respondents in this study who were influenced in their career decisions by counselors and teachers, as well as the heavy influence of family members, the informal, socially-oriented relationships between youth and adults in various positions provided by these organizations seem to be destined to bring positive results. As the member of Ebony Service states, "(in comparison to East St. Louis) here the means of progress are available if you know how to take advantage."

The problems of East St. Louis are more severe, in some ways, than those of the Black community in Edwardsville primarily because of the larger Black population. Only recently have the industries (oil refineries, steel mills) in the area begun employing Blacks to any extent; previously, only low-paying jobs involving heavy labor were open to them. The increasing Black population in East St. Louis has outstripped job availability and many industries have left East St. Louis proper because of past racial strife and union problems in the rapidly changing community. As whites left, they took their businesses with them. The present city administration, predominantly Blacks, has obtained federal funds for educational and developmental economic programs; the aim is to develop a climate conducive to community growth and attractive to industry.

The Director of the Adult Continuation School in East St. Louis believes that concepts of career education must be changed; he is concerned with the development of jobs, having been disillusioned about training people for jobs that don't exist. He would like to teach construction work by buying lots and building houses that people can live in; to set up bicycle repair shops, yard services and nurseries, office equipment repair centers, a boating service on the lack at a nearby (unused) park; to train insurance and book representatives, as well as other business agents who are now mostly white. All of these

are occupations that are found in most white communities, but which departed East St. Louis with its white citizens. Black patrons must go outside the community for various services: There is not even an inside movie theatre in the community.

An economic development program such as envisioned by the Director would require extensive Federal funding, but it is desperately needed to fill the vacuum that exists in the East St. Louis area between manual and skilled labor, on the one hand, and professional and technical occupations, on the other. An educator from the South remarked that down South, Blacks went into the trades and passed them on to their sons; since immigrant groups didn't generally settle in the South, there was little competition from whites, who are mostly farmers. Now many Blacks in the South are small contractors. Since East St. Louis is predominantly Black, Blacks need to offer these services as a basis for a healthy community life and cultural development.

That Black leadership in East St. Louis is aware of the ingredients of a thriving community life was apparent at the NAACP Banquet held in Spring, 1972. The main speaker, Clarence Mitchell, who is the organization's representative in Washington, gave a forceful address which was very informative about the political situation for Blacks. The didactic nature of the meeting was muted by the master of ceremonies, the owner of a large local funeral home, who was very humorous and who performed countless "rituals of unification" involving references to poverty, human weakness, spirituality--all the ingredients of "soul"--which helped to bring together the heterogeneous audience of young and old, Black and (some) White, businessmen and businesswomen, wealthy and poor, educated and uneducated. After the Address, there were awards and recognition to various organizations: The Progressive Men of East St. Louis were honored for having sold the most tickets to the banquet; a

women's sorority won the second prize and also the first prize for selling the most advertisements; the Beautician's Association, reported to be "real go-getters" won fourth place in selling tickets having won first place the previous year. The spirit of competition was equalled by the good-natured teasing and admiration of peers. The Banquet was in honor of life-membership holders in NAACP; but many individuals who had rendered service in the community generally were also honored, and the Mayor was present to do some of the honors. The community spirit and pride which were expressed at the affair were impressive, indicating that provided an economic base, the prognosis for community health is good.

Public school education in East St. Louis has been regarded as low in quality by educators; schools have apparently been conducting a "holding" operation in the face of lack of opportunities in the area. In view of the increasing opportunities for advanced education (State Community College, SIUE), cultural opportunities (Dunham's Center for the Performing Arts; proposed Zimbabwe Cultural Center[6]) and political participation (Black City administration), the educational system is bound to improve despite short-term political difficulties. The developments mentioned probably account for much of the high aspiration expressed in interviews. The Supplemental Instructional program at SIUE, under the direction of an Assistant to the Vice President (Black, an Edwardsville citizen) was instituted to train, counsel, guide and teach basic skills to students with disadvantaged educational backgrounds, white or Black. This program has had considerable success in helping students with little exposure to higher education to develop identity as scholars and in teaching them how to succeed in college through summer programs and continuing counseling, tutoring, and various types of aid. The informal, paternal/maternal or big brother/big sister character of the relationships with

students demonstrates that Blacks realize what is necessary for Blacks; and, indeed, that in planning for the future of their people they cannot be anything but Black.

Summary and Findings

The intent of this study was to develop a descriptive account of influences on careers of Black youth in the metro-east area; this aim has led into aspects of politics, economic, and community life. The main findings are: (1) the influence of family over teachers, counselors and other non-relatives on youth in their educational and occupational careers; (2) the educational and occupational deprivation of local Black families in the past. (1) and (2) together result in the frequent inability of Black youth to take advantage of opportunities that may be opening up for Blacks in metro-east, through lack of example among "significant others", faulty or scanty information, or in some instances, unrealistic goals.. Another finding of the study was the generally high aspirational level among Black youth; given a lack of opportunity or an inability to take advantage of opportunity, this condition can lead to a highly frustrating and potentially explosive situation.

Some attempts to meliorate this state-of-affairs were described, including educational programs, voluntary organizations, political and cultural enterprises, and efforts by individuals to increase community awareness; these programs are characterized by the informal, primary-type relationships that prevail in Black social life. Counselors and teachers who relate to Black youth need to be aware of the Black family structure as described herein and should attempt to adapt their programs to the extended family model, hopefully resulting in concerned, intensive counselling. Further efforts at economic development need to emerge, which should be supported by the total community;

also, white educators and community leaders should perhaps emulate programs of community enrichment developed by Blacks. Even for the affluent, the quality of community life in this society can, assuredly, be improved. While perhaps Blacks need to learn some of the "know how" of economic development, in other respects--integrity of family, respect for educational achievement, a participant art, grass-roots participation in politics, and warmth in human relationships--America can learn from examples provided by its Black citizens, leading to the enhancement of the total society. [7]

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